

FY'24 Nutrition and Health Services Action Plan

Objective: By March 31, 2024 the Iowa WIC Program will host a virtual training for local agency WIC contractors on the newly revamped Nutrition Education Needs Assessment Tool (NENA Tool). This training will be done by Altarum and include the following: contents of the NENA Tool, how to fill out the tool, how to connect its use to writing the Nutrition Service Plans of WIC RFAs and RFPs and how to use data and analyze trends.

Purpose Statement: In October 2022, the Iowa WIC Program began working with Altarum, a nonprofit organization that works with federal and state health agencies and foundations to improve health outcomes of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. One of the initial projects was for Altarum to develop an updated WIC NENA Tool by reviewing the current tool used by the Iowa WIC Program and by assessing local agency WIC contractors on the type of NENA Tool they would find most useful for nutrition and breastfeeding action planning and making WIC service changes within in their agency.

The original NENA Tool was developed many years ago with the intention that agencies would use it (though it was optional) as they were working on their RFP/RFA. While the tool was redesigned a couple times over the years based upon local agency feedback and updated annually with state data and links to other data sources, its use remained optional. With changes to the RFP/RFA, time and new local WIC contractors, it became apparent that use of the tool was no longer widely understood. We also saw an opportunity to develop strategies and supports to assist local agency staff in understanding how to understand and use data to support their work.

Action Plan:

- In October 2023, Altarum and the Iowa WIC team will start meeting to develop a plan for a training on the NENA Tool including content of the training, associated training materials needed and training logistics (date, platform, presenters).
- The Iowa WIC team and Altarum will continue to meet throughout the project period to consult, create and review training content and materials.
- By March 2024 Altarum will provide a virtual training that will be recorded for local agency WIC staff on the newly revamped NENA Tool. The training will include the NENA Tools contents, how to use it when writing action plans within the WIC RFA and RFP and how to use data and analyze trends.